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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1177

Introduced by Assembly Members Fong and Hill
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Blumenfield, Chesbro, Fuentes,
Jones, and Portantino)
(Coauthors: Senators DeSaulnier and Lowenthal)

February 27, 2009

An act to add Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8260) to Division 8 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to homelessness.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1177, as amended, Fong. Homelessness: Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Under existing law, several agencies have prescribed responsibilities relating to homeless persons.

This bill would, among other things, create the California Interagency Council on Homelessness, composed of specified members, to construct cross-agency and community cooperation in responding to homelessness, use a more efficient and supportive method in implementing evidence-based approaches to address homelessness, and, to the extent possible, plan to end homelessness in the state. This bill would also

require the council to submit any reports or documents that it creates, within 90 days of being finalized by the council, to specified committees of the Legislature and to perform other duties as prescribed.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) California has the highest rate of homelessness and the
- 4 highest ratio of homeless people per resident, with 360,000 people
- 5 sleeping on the streets or in shelters on any given night.
- 6 (b) Homelessness is traumatic for those who suffer it, often
- 7 leading to separated families, exacerbation of health conditions, a
- 8 rise in avoidable emergency room use, social and academic delays
- 9 among children, and greater likelihood of incarceration.
- 10 (c) Many people who lack permanent shelter and the ability to
- 11 access regular support ricochet through separate and expensive
- 12 public systems: overburdened corrections systems, overcrowded
- 13 hospital emergency rooms, mental health programs, substance
- 14 abuse treatment and detox facilities, shelters, and emergency
- 15 housing. As a result, people experiencing chronic homelessness
- 16 use a disproportionate share of state and local services.
- 17 (d) Innovative approaches across the nation and within
- 18 California show promise for reducing homelessness and the
- 19 resulting impact on state services.
- 20 (e) Changing the system and reducing homelessness requires
- 21 coordination and cooperation among federal, state, and local
- 22 governments, as well as private sector organizations.
- 23 (f) Creation of a statewide coordinating council is an important
- 24 and effective tool in supporting initiatives to end homelessness in
- 25 California.
- 26 (g) Creation of a statewide coordinating council would stem
- 27 avoidable costs of maintaining the number of homeless persons
- 28 and would, therefore, result in reducing avoidable costs to multiple
- 29 programs.
- 30 (h) Homelessness affects multiple systems in California,
- 31 including housing, mental health and substance abuse, education,
- 32 corrections, foster care, health care, and veterans services. Though

1 most other states have adopted a plan to end homelessness because
2 of the cost impact on all of these systems, California has not crafted
3 a similar plan. A codified, structured interagency council on
4 homelessness would help fill this gap.

5 (i) In November 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger created the
6 Governor's Homeless Initiative, which included plans to form an
7 interagency coordinating council to reduce homelessness. The
8 Business, Transportation and Housing Agency's 2005–10
9 Consolidated Plan further indicates the importance of an
10 interagency council on homelessness. Despite these intentions, a
11 council has not met regularly or publicly since the Governor
12 adopted his Homeless Initiative.

13 (j) California must give priority to developing consolidated,
14 coordinated, and cooperative approaches to issues of homelessness,
15 including, but not limited to, specific issues addressing homeless
16 youth, families, veterans, parolees, victims of domestic violence,
17 people with substance abuse or other mental health disorders,
18 people experiencing chronic homelessness, seniors, and disabled
19 people.

20 (k) Working within current costs, a revitalized Interagency
21 Council on Homelessness will reduce duplication of efforts and
22 the costs of homelessness and will redirect resources to more
23 effective approaches, developing a more integrated system and
24 eliminating fragmentation.

25 SEC. 2. Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8260) is added
26 to Division 8 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

27
28 CHAPTER 7. CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON
29 HOMELESSNESS
30

31 8260. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions
32 shall apply:

33 (a) "Council" means the California Interagency Council on
34 Homelessness.

35 (b) "Stakeholder organization" means a nonprofit or faith-based
36 organization whose primary mission is to prevent or end
37 homelessness, to provide services or health care to people who are
38 homeless, or to create housing for people who are homeless.

39 8261. (a) There is hereby created in state government the
40 California Interagency Council on Homelessness with a mission

1 to construct cross-agency and community cooperation in
2 responding to homelessness, to use a more efficient and supportive
3 method in implementing evidence-based approaches to address
4 homelessness, and, to the extent possible, plan to end homelessness
5 in the state.

6 (b) The Governor shall designate a lead agency that shall seek
7 all available federal funding, including, but not limited to,
8 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11301
9 et seq.) grant and technical assistance funds, for purposes of
10 funding the council and its activities.

11 (c) Membership of the council shall include all of the following:

12 (1) At least one representative with decisionmaking authority
13 from each of the following:

- 14 (A) The State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs.
- 15 (B) The Department of Community Services and Development.
- 16 (C) The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.
- 17 (D) The State Department of Education.
- 18 (E) The State Department of Health Care Services.
- 19 (F) The Department of Housing and Community Development.
- 20 (G) The California Housing Finance Agency.
- 21 (H) The State Department of Mental Health.
- 22 (I) The State Department of Social Services.
- 23 (J) The Department of Veterans Affairs.

24 (2) A representative of the Governor's office.

25 (3) A representative of local law enforcement or an organization
26 representing the interests of local law enforcement, to be appointed
27 by the Governor.

28 (4) A representative of county government or an organization
29 representing the interests of county government, to be appointed
30 by ~~the Chairperson of~~ the Senate Committee on Rules.

31 (5) A representative of city government or an organization
32 representing the interests of city government, to be appointed by
33 the Speaker of the Assembly.

34 (6) Representatives of two stakeholder organizations, with one
35 to be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the other to
36 be appointed by ~~the Chairperson of~~ the Senate Committee on Rules.

37 (7) Two people who have experienced homelessness, with one
38 to be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the other to
39 be appointed by ~~the Chairperson of~~ the Senate Committee on Rules.

1 (d) The council may, at its discretion, invite stakeholders, people
2 who have experienced homelessness, members of philanthropic
3 communities, and experts to participate in meetings or provide
4 information to the council.

5 (e) The Governor shall appoint a chairperson and
6 vice-chairperson from among the members of the council. Within
7 current costs, the council may establish working groups, task
8 forces, or other structures from within its membership or with
9 outside members to assist it in its work. Working groups, task
10 forces, or other structures established by the council shall determine
11 their own meeting schedules.

12 (f) Members of the council shall serve without compensation,
13 except that the representatives appointed pursuant to paragraph
14 (7) of subdivision (c) shall receive compensation if private,
15 philanthropic, or other nonstate funding resources are available.
16 The council may compensate council staff if the Legislature makes
17 a future appropriation, to operate, manage, or conduct the business
18 of the council.

19 (g) All reports or documents that the council creates shall be
20 submitted, within 90 days of being finalized by the council, to the
21 Senate Committee on Transportation and Housing, the Senate
22 Committee on Human Services, the Assembly Committee on
23 Housing and Community Development, and the Assembly
24 Committee on Human Services. However, nothing in this chapter
25 shall be construed as requiring the council to create a report or
26 document.

27 8262. (a) The council shall do all of the following:

28 (1) Hold public meetings at least once every quarter.

29 (2) Act as the lead for coordinating and planning the state's
30 response to homelessness, including, but not limited to,
31 coordinating funding that the state receives from the federal
32 government for the prevention or reduction of homelessness or for
33 services delivered to people who are homeless or at risk of
34 homelessness.

35 (3) Discuss potential mechanisms for streamlining the
36 administration of programs across agencies and jurisdictions to
37 reduce duplication, consolidate availability of services, and ease
38 clients' access to services.

1 (4) Discuss potential mechanisms for streamlining funding of
2 homelessness programs to leverage existing resources more
3 effectively.

4 (5) Solicit input and suggestions from stakeholders, the business
5 community, the concerned public, and other governmental agencies
6 on the most effective strategies to address homelessness.

7 (6) Identify best practices from other states in combating
8 homelessness.

9 (7) Within current costs, or provided funding is available for
10 related costs, create a plan for council actions by the end of the
11 first year after the initial meeting, with annual review, to implement
12 recommendations for policy, regulatory, and resource changes
13 needed to accomplish objectives, as well as each agency's
14 responsibilities on the council.

15 (8) Within current costs, or provided funding is available for
16 related costs, and within three years of the initial meeting of the
17 council, adopt a plan to reduce or end homelessness.

18 (9) Discuss potential improvements or plans for discharge of
19 people likely to become homeless after leaving institutions,
20 including, but not limited to, prisons, crisis health care facilities,
21 and foster care.

22 (10) Gather needs assessments from local jurisdictions that are
23 currently required to submit needs assessments to a state agency,
24 including, but not limited to, city housing elements and community
25 continuation of care.

26 (11) Not later than January 1, 2015, create a centralized database
27 on homelessness, provided federal funds or other nonstate moneys
28 are available for that purpose.

29 (12) Not later than January 1, 2017, assist in the coordination
30 of a statewide continuum of care, provided funds are available.

31 (13) Identify private and public funding partnerships.

32 (b) The council may engage or accept the services of agency
33 personnel, contract with nonprofit organizations, or employ council
34 staff to operate, manage, or conduct the business of the council,
35 provided that private, philanthropic, or other nonstate funding
36 resources are available for that purpose, or the Legislature makes
37 a future appropriation for that purpose.

38 8263. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the council
39 shall operate within the current budget of each department and
40 agency represented. Each department and agency shall cooperate

- 1 with the council and furnish it with information and assistance that
- 2 is necessary or useful to further the purposes of this chapter.

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